

Meet APMA President Laura J. Pickard, DPM

Podiatry's strength requires its unity.

On Saturday, March 12, Laura J. Pickard, DPM, was sworn in as president of the American Podiatric Medical Association. Dr. Pickard has been in private practice in Chicago for more than 30 years.

She graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia as a biology major and the Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. Dr. Pickard completed her residency training at Cook County Hospital and is a diplomate of the American Board of Podiatric Medicine and the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. She is also a fellow of the Faculty of Podiatric Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.

Dr. Pickard served the Illinois Podiatric Medical Association in a variety of leadership positions, including the presidency, and began her service at the national level with what was then the APMA Health Systems Committee. She has been involved with multiple committees at APMA during her long history of service but still counts the Health Policy and Practice Committee, where she championed payer outreach, as near and dear to her heart.

Podiatry Management recently spoke with Dr. Pickard about her priorities for her presidency. Read on and get to know President Pickard.

PM: Parity has certainly been a hot-button issue of late. Where do you believe the profession stands?



Laura J. Pickard, DPM

holders, and multiple House of Delegates resolutions, we have defined what parity means and have tasked the profession with specific goals and objectives over the last 16 years.

We have successfully reached most of those goals and objectives internally within our profession. Now we are at the point where we must reach out to other healthcare organizations such as the AMA to see where we stand. Ultimately, the question is: do others consider us to have parity based on comparable standards? That is one definition of parity and one pathway to parity we have embarked upon thus far; however, there are others that we can explore in the future.

I'm so pleased that we were able to pass Policy Proposition 2-22 with broad support during the House of Delegates meeting. The proposition made it the official position of APMA

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Dr. Pickard: Parity is a term that gets thrown around a lot, and everyone seems to have a different idea of what it actually means. No matter how we define it, without a strategy to achieve it, parity will be elusive. Thanks to APMA, the Committee on Physician Parity, various state and national task forces, stake-

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The proposition also stipulated that APMA will continue to work

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Dr. Pickard (from page 75)

to ensure that DPMs are authorized by federal and state governments, hospitals, private and public health systems, and third-party payers to practice to the full extent of their education and training.

The actions of the house on Policy Proposition 2-22 are a perfect example of what we can achieve when we come together in a spirit of collaboration.

PM: You spoke at your installation about the importance of unity within the profession. What does that mean for your presidency and for the pursuit of parity?

Pickard: Unity within our profession is so critical to our success in achieving parity. There are so many different definitions of parity and so many paths to get there. But no matter what path we choose, we need to work together.

It's vitally important that we engage a broader cross-section of all our leaders, stakeholders, and members, including academia. Our various intra-professional organizations

of our members' unique, diverse, and ever-expanding podiatric settings and priorities, listening can be a challenge. We must work together and understand that we all want what is best for this profession. Our future depends on it.

PM: Outside of parity, what are some of the challenges facing the profession?

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Pickard: Well, there are certainly challenges associated with our members' practices due to the ongoing pandemic. APMA must continue to be the leader in providing necessary and helpful resources to all of our members during this time. Healthcare delivery systems are also evolving rapidly, and we must make sure that our podiatric services are included in the new healthcare models that are being formed. Career awareness and student

ant moving forward. That message must also be inclusive and meaningful to all members.

PM: Inclusivity has been a focus at APMA recently.

Pickard: Yes! In order to create a unified profession, we have to give every member a voice. I'm proud to share that the APMA Board of Trust-

ees has created a permanent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to ensure that we continue the outstanding work our DEI Task Force started.

PM: What would you ask members of the profession to do?

Pickard: Get involved. Whether that is at a state level or national level, your active participation in this very small profession is critical. Our national organization is only as healthy and successful as the state components. If you are not a member, consider joining. APMA is doing battle to defend this profession on a daily basis, and we need every podiatrist.

Get to know your legislators, both at the state and national level. Relationships established and solidified before we make the “ask” are vital to our legislative goals. Encourage young members to get involved and help mentor them if you are a more experienced member. If you are a younger member, just start by networking with other members. Our Young Physicians Program is constantly expanding and will help guide you throughout your career.

I thank APMA members for the trust they have placed in me, and I encourage you to share your thoughts with me and with your association so that we may continue to fight for every member of this profession. **PM**

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can no longer work in a bubble. We are just too small not to pool all our various talents, skills, and experiences together to present a unified front.

PM: How do you envision that your leadership will help to bring the profession together?

Pickard: I believe that listening is the most important quality of a leader. It sounds like a passive effort, but in reality, to be effective, listening must be an active and persistent priority. Our profession is at its best when we listen and understand each other in a respectful manner. Because

recruitment are fundamental challenges we are actively addressing.

We need other stakeholders to be committed and involved, as well. We have three states that still need a modernized scope of practice that includes ankle privileges. And we have other long-term legislative goals as well, such as passage of the Helping Ensure Life-and-Limb-Saving Access to Podiatric Physicians (HELLPP) Act.

I believe if we view these challenges as opportunities, we can work cohesively to obtain real change in our profession's future. The ability to speak with one overarching message is very import-